

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 OC-06
CCO-00 MCT-01 /096 W
-----121451Z 059793 /43

R 121150Z MAY 77
FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6001
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMEMBASSY MASERU
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY MBABANE
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
USMISSIN USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L JOHANNESBURG 1159

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY ALSO

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SF, PINS, PINT
SUBJECT: PLANS FOR DEMONSTRATIONS COMMEMORATING ANNIVERSARY
OF LAST JUNE'S RIOTS

REF: JOHANNESBURG 969

1. WITH BARELY A MONTH REMAINING BEFORE JUNE 16, THE DATE RIOTS
BROKE OUT LAST YEAR IN SOWETO, PLANS ARE PROGRESSING BOTH ABOVE
AND UNDERGROUND FOR COMMORATIVE DEMONSTRATIONS. MANY, PERHAPS
THE WHOLE RANGE, OF BLACK POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS WILL
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BE INVOLVED IN ONE OR MORE ACTIVITIES DEDICATED TO THE REMBRANCE
OF LAST JUNE 16. DIFFERENT SOURCES HAVE VARIOUSLY DESCRIBED PLANNED
ACTIVITIES RANGING FROM A DAY OF PRAYER TO A "CHRISTMAS IN JUNE"
HOLIDAY. IN ANY CASE, POLICE ARE AWARE AND ALREADY FORMULATING
CONTINGENCY PLANS TO DEAL WITH ANY DISORDERLY OR VIOLENT OUTBREAK.

WWM SOME CHURCH FIGURES HAVE ALREADY SPOKEN OF PLANS FOR A NATIONAL

DAY OF PRAYER ON JUNE 16. THIS MAY INCLUDE A MARCH THROUGH SOWETO, ALTHOUGH THERE IS SOME CONCERN ABOUT THE POTENTIAL FOR CONFRONTATIONS WITH POLICE, AN EVENT MODERATE LEADERS CLEARLY WISH TO AVOID. OTHERS, ASSOCIATED WITH MORE MILITANT STUDENT GROUPS, APPARENTLY HAVE REJECTED THE IDEA OF NON-VIOLENT DAY OF PRAYER AS AN 'INADEQUATE' RESPONSE AND ARE LOOKING AT THE IDEA OF A WORKER BOYCOTT AND/OR STUDENT MARCH. STILL OTHERS TALK OF A "CHRISTMAS IN JUNE" HOLIDAY WHERE WORKERS WILL NOT COME TO WORK, STUDENTS WILL SKIP CLASSES, AND SOWETO RESIDENTS WILL 'CELEBRATE' A DAY OF REMEMBRANCE. IN ANY CASE, IT APPEARS THERE WILL BE AT LEAST SOME BOYCOTT OF CLASSES AND WORK WITH THE RESULTANT SITUATION ONE OF LARGE NUMBERS OF STUDENTS AND WORKERS IN THE STREETS. THIS IS THE THREAT THAT SOWETO POLICE FEAR MOST, THAT LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE WILL BE EGGED ON TO VIOLENCE AND THAT POLICE WILL HAVE TO ACT.

3. IN TALK WITH CONOFF, SOWETO POLICE CONFIRMED THEY ARE ALREADY PREPARING FOR THE 16TH. LARGE NUMBERS OF POLICE WILL BE AT HAND, BACKED UP BY HIPPO ARMORED VEHICLES IN A PROBABLE REPEAT OF POLICE TACTICS DURING RECENT RENT PROTEST MARCH (SEE REFTEL) SOWETO POLICE CHIEF VISSER STATED HIS MEN WOULD ATTEMPT TO RELY ON TEARGAS AND BATONS, BUT MEN WOULD BE ARMED WITH GUNS IF THESE TACTICS FAILED. HE MADE CLEAR HE WISHES TO AVOID ANY CONFRONTATION AND WOULD PROBABLY REPEAT RESTRAINED APPROACH DEMONSTRATED DURING RENT MARCH, BUT "I WILL NOT EXPOSE MY MEN TO UNNECESSARY DANGER". HE ALSO GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT NOT ALL HIS POLICE SUPERIORS WERE CONVINCED 'SOFT' APPROACH WAS BEST WAY OF HANDLING PROTEST MARCHES. HE INDICATED IF SOWETO ESCAPED THIS COMING JUNE 16 WITH FEW CASUALTIES, HIS APPROACH (SOFT) WOULD BE
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VINDICATED.
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Message Attributes

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